

ENGLISH: *CREATIVE WRITING*

The Dying Minutes

1:59pm, 21st January 2013:

I want to escape”.

I leant my head onto the window pane and closed my eyes – desolate and discrete. The fierce wind gnawed at my innards leaving me empty inside. I had nothing, I was nothing. I opened my eyes and took a deep breath. I looked out the window to confront the sludge that had taken hold of our society. Darkness consumed me, my soul gently trickling out of me as if I was just skin and bones. I gathered myself together and tentatively stood on the window ledge. I was almost free, liberated from the sickness and confinement of the world I had lived in for almost an eternity. No regret, no fear, just the will to die.

I crouched into a ball, heart pumping out of my chest, faster and faster as my fate became ever so close I could almost touch it. Emaciated by fatigue and suffering, I closed my eyes and a burst of excitement roared through me. My train had reached the end of the line and would make its last toot in all its glory. I had sworn to keep my promises and this final act would consolidate my oath to my brotherhood. It was at that moment I pressed the switch knowing that in sixty minutes the city of Makkah would no longer exist.

10 years earlier:

The Arabian sun rose in the hot summer sky painting the earth a deep crimson gold. I awoke greeting the morning with a feeling of conviction and purpose. It had been a year since I had joined the order and now it felt like home to me. Like a priest taking his final vows, I was committed, having sold my soul to this enigmatic institution. The order shared my secrets and held more still darker than my own. The proposed aim of the clinic was to abolish terrorism. But to do this, we had to fight fire with fire. We were radicals – yes; but I was totally ignorant of my allegiance to an even more sinister faction than the one we were fighting.

9:32pm 10th January 2012:

After years of patiently waiting for my call of duty to suppress the terrorist regime, I had become a hardened and disillusioned man. Bare foot and tattered clothed, I desperately stumbled through the streets where ethereal shapes and distorted figures shifted in the half-lit fog, glaring at me from the smallest of crevices. This place was no longer my solace but an eternal prison for all who dared to venture here.

As I trudged up the steps to receive my latest instruction, frustration took hold and the elder’s words were silenced by my sudden violent outburst. As he drew his gun, my body stiffened, anticipating the consequences for my actions. But to my surprise, and to my regret, the elder whispered to me in a soft undertone.

“You are ready”.

Vanity was my temptation – an inordinate desire to manifest in one’s excellence. I wanted glory; I was an agent of justice. I knew my duty, I knew it well. But how well did I know my inner self; what the consequences of my actions were? My following words haunted me as they would for the rest of my life.

“I will commit.”

That very night, I accepted the elder's final commandment; to set off a bomb to destroy the city of Mecca.

2:31pm Tue 21st Jan 2013:

Time ticked by: thirty minutes, twenty minutes, ten. The world passed before me, oblivious to the fact that in half an hour, Makkah would be a distant memory. I was free, liberated from the confines of my inner self. Committed now, I had sacrificed my soul to abolish the terrorist regime.

Five minutes left on the clock: With vision blurred and nostrils flared, I was in a state of pure helplessness, yet I felt strangely in control. I was sealing my own fate, but out of fear, I considered opening the bomb and cutting the wires. I had a few minutes to do so. But as the minutes dwindled away, I embraced the teachings of the brotherhood, reassured in the knowledge they had granted me the promise of heroism. But was this my true destiny? The insecurity had turned to peace and my heart beat slowed to a dull thump. Solitude was my only consolation – deep, dark, and deadly solitude.

As I succumbed to my new temptations to reign in heaven, fear bubbled inside me, percolating to the surface like an unwanted toxin. The paroxysm of grief that simmered inside me had seized my purpose and I started to question my devotion. I was consumed by terror. Too late to disarm, with thirty seconds on the clock, I was bound by an un-merciful contract to face chaos in its most ruthless form.

“Death waits for no man – and if he does, he doesn't wait very long”.

Five Seconds to impact: A plastered facial expression of content had been smeared by the horror that myself and 1.5 million people will face. The brotherhood had succeeded with their malicious endeavors, and I was their scapegoat. At that fatal moment, I remembered the last words I vowed to my elder and prayed I would be forgiven.